

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 09436 091541Z

54

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 PC-10 CU-05 DRC-01 IO-14 /144 W

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R 091406Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0496

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 9436

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINT SGEN EGEN ECON SHUM SOCI ET

SUBJECT: NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION

REF: ADDIS ABABA 9435

THERE FOLLOW EMBASSY'S PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON SUBSTANCE DRAFT CONSTITUTION DESCRIBED REFTEL. ADDRESSEES WILL WISH BEAR IN MIND THAT CONTENTS REFTEL BASED ON PUBLISHED SUMMARY AND CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION'S STILL PRIVILEGED REPORT TO PRIMIN, BUT NOT RPT NOT ON DRAFT TEXT ITSELF, WHICH EMBASSY HAS YET TO SEE. TEXT, INCIDENTAL- LY, REPORTEDLY WILL BE PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH IN NEXT FEW DAYS.

1. DRAFT CONSTITUTION'S PROVISIONS WOULD APPEAR PRESCRIBE MODERN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, WHICH EDUCATED ETHIOPIAN ELITES WILL WELCOME BUT WHICH BULK THEIR COMPATRIOTS WILL FIND ALIEN IN TERMS BOTH OF THEIR TRADITIONS AND THEIR HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE. IEG WOULD BECOME A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS RATHER THAN MEN, WITH A CON-STITUTIONAL MONARCH FULFILLING A UNIFYING SYMBOLIC FUNCTION ABOVE POLITICS; LIBERTIES ANCHORED IN LAW; CHECKS AND BALANCES BETWEEN COEQUAL BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT; AND POLITICS BUILT AROUND THE IN-CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 09436 091541Z

TERPLAY OF POLITICAL PARTIES NONEXISTENT AT PRESENT.

2. DRAFT CONSTITUTION THUS REPRESENTS ATTEMPT LITERALLY TO TRANSFORM ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL STRUCTURES FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. MODERNIZATION EFFORT THIS REPRESENTS IS MORE THAN RADICAL IN LOCAL CONTEXT. THIS SUGGESTS THAT EVENTUAL ADOPTION OF SUCH CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS LIKELY PRESENT ETHIOPIAN LEADERSHIP WITH ARDUOUS, STRESSFUL PROBLEMS OF TRANSFORMING ITS STIPULATIONS INTO POLITICAL REALITIES. IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS WOULD THRUST UPON ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE - - WITH WELCOME LIBERTIES - - FULL WEIGHT OF DEMOCRATIC RESPONSIBILITIES. REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW RAPIDLY AND WELL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THEIR SOCIETY AND THINKING, WHICH THIS INSTRUMENT WOULD BOTH STIMULATE AND PERMIT, CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED - - TRANSFORMATIONS WITHOUT WHICH THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THIS CONSTITUTION CANNOT BE REALIZED.

WYMAN

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Message Attributes

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